

BOOK REVIEWS

EVANS, G. EDWARD; WARD, PATRICIA LAYZELL; AND RUGAAS, BENEDIK. **Management Basics for Information Professionals.** New York, NY: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 2000. 560 p. Softcover. \$55.00 ISBN: 1-55570-370-4. ©

Because a preponderance of librarians have a liberal arts background, many bring minimal management skills or experience to librarianship. As these librarians move into management positions, they learn such skills on the job. Although learning by doing can be successful, it is more effective to have tools such as *Management Basics for Information Professionals*, available to assist in the process.

In the preface of this text, the authors define their purpose as the provision of "a comprehensive introduction to the management of libraries and other information centers" (page xvii). They further refine this statement by stating "We wish to emphasize the word *introduction*" (page xvii). This emphasis should be kept in mind when reading this book. The generic nature of the text—general librarianship rather than health sciences librarianship—is also important to remember.

The book is organized into three parts. "Part One: Background" has three chapters devoted to management concepts, management concepts in library and information services, and environmental issues. "Part Two: Management: Knowledge and Skills" contains ten chapters that cover every basic management subject area: marketing; innovation and change; decision making; the planning process; power, authority, and responsibility; delegation; performance, quality, and control; communication; motivation; and leadership. "Part Three: Managing Resources" is devoted to the management of personnel, fiscal affairs, technology, and physical facilities. The book

concludes with an epilogue that discusses emerging trends and their impact on the management of libraries in the future. Each chapter provides an up-to-date overview, rather than an indepth review, of its topic. Within the chapters, particularly useful features are the referrals to related material in other chapters. The summaries at the end of the chapters are refreshing in their style. The major strengths of this publication, in addition to the overviews and summaries, are the two one-line quotes that introduce each chapter, chapter summaries, "References," "Further Readings," "For Further Thought," "Tips," and the various charts, lists, and graphics.

Each chapter begins with two quotes, one from Maurice Line and the other from a variety of authors. Collectively these quotes could be an "all I ever needed to know in management" manual. After reading a couple of chapters in the book, this reviewer began flipping to the front of every chapter just to read these quotes. The two quotes from the chapter on personnel are typical: "It is safest to employ honest men, even though they may not be the cleverest" by Ekken Kaibara and "Never write people off—either fire their enthusiasm or fire them, with enthusiasm" by Maurice Line (page 381).

Beside synthesizing the chapter contents, each chapter summary creates a philosophical frame of reference for the chapter. The summaries also reveal the authors' value systems. The following excerpt from the Chapter 15 summary demonstrates these qualities.

We return to an essential point made at the start of this chapter: that a budget is a plan and represents choices about alternate possible expenditures. The overall budget process considers monetary inputs, and revenue centers focus on the units in which outputs are the focus of monetary interest. We covered the pro-

cess of budget preparation, budget formats, fund accounting, and auditing. Finally, libraries are increasingly involved with fund raising to boost their budgets; therefore we addressed that issue as well. As much as we may wish it were otherwise, money does seem to make the world go round. If the library does not have adequate funding, the managers face difficult choices in what services, as well as the level, to offer users. It is evident that one of the important skills, apart from planning, that a manager needs to demonstrate during this process is of communication—and we would add stamina and patience. (pages 474–5)

This reviewer suggests that readers begin reading this text by reading the summaries from the all the chapters. This gives a comprehensive overview of the text and captures its flavor as well.

The extensive references cited in each chapter include classic articles as well as current literature. "Further Readings" presents a list of general readings followed by a list of readings in library and information services. These readings include only items from the 1990s. The combination of references and readings provide the reader with a comprehensive reading list on all phases of management.

Each chapter includes features that are particularly helpful for the librarian who is new to management. The first feature is the "For Further Thought" box that appears in each chapter. All of these boxes contain questions that readers should answer, statements that should be assessed, or exercises that should be done. This provides a hands-on learning experience for readers. Many of these "For Further Thought" boxes could stimulate group discussion at staff meetings. The following example is from the "Innovation and Change" chapter. "Think about the ways that people can demonstrate resistance to change. Try and list six that you

might encounter in any organization" (page 116).

The "Tip" box is incorporated into selected chapters. The information in the "Tip" is either advice or an observation that could enhance the understanding of the text. In "Chapter 13: Leadership," the tip states:

Taking a role model can help to identify the attributes of a leader, but following them slavishly will not necessarily lead to success. Far better is to have a mentor whom you respect and who can give advice on developing leadership skill. (page 367)

A particular strength of this text is its extensive use of lists, charts, graphs, and figures. These items are incorporated into the text rather than located in appendixes. This arrangement is very effective. One of this reviewer's favorites is the list of "positive actions that one can take to help generate more and better understanding between oneself and the supervisor" (pages 58–9). The list is particularly useful, because it has two sections, one for the employee and one for the supervisor.

The chapters that are most effective are those that cover narrower ranges of concepts in depth. "Chapter 12: Motivation" is a good example of this style. Following introductory material on motivation and behavior, the chapter presents three categories of motivation theories—content, process, and reinforcement. Tables and charts are used effectively to supplement textual material.

Some chapters incorporate so many concepts that the coverage is almost superficial. These chapters seem more like glossaries than synopses of concepts. For example, in the 17.5 textual pages of "Chapter 5: Innovation and Change," seven concepts are presented: resistance to change, implementing change, innovation and information centers, innovation techniques, encouraging imaginative thinking, techniques

for generating new ideas, and analytic and innovative thinking. In the section on techniques for generating new ideas, nine different techniques in two different categories are discussed. But "Chapter 1: Management Concepts" successfully incorporates four concepts and eighteen subconcepts in thirty-one textual pages. It works because the chapter is a historical overview, rather than a discussion of concepts that would be applied in the real world setting.

Reader of this text will likely have different opinions about which chapters are the best and which are the weakest. It elicits a very personal reaction, based on background, perspective, expectations, and evaluation criteria. This reviewer's staff, who examined selected chapters, had varying opinions and assessments of any given chapter.

Although the authors have indicated that the material in this publication is introductory in nature, the title of the book indicates that the book is about "basics." This creates confusion about the real intent of the text. If readers assume that "basics" implies "how to do it," they will be disappointed. However, if readers assume that "basics" means a synopsis of the various facets of a management concept, their expectations will be met.

The range of topics included is expansive, with the emphasis on the management process and its theoretical foundations. Almost 300 pages are devoted specifically to management knowledge and skills. In contrast, *The Medical Library Association Guide to Managing Health Care Libraries* [1] (see the following review) is more pragmatic, focusing on the practice of managing people, resources, and services in the health care library. Topics covered in the MLA publication that are not addressed in *Management Basics for Information Professionals* are libraries in the health care set-

ting, health care environment, one-person library, information and educational services, information resources, collection development, access to library resources, document delivery, managing audiovisuals, and health information for patients and consumers.

Management Basics for Information Professionals nicely complements *The Medical Library Association Guide to Managing Health Care Libraries*. Because of its conceptual approach to management and its comprehensive theoretical foundation, it offers health care librarians the opportunity to incorporate major management concepts into the everyday operation of the health care library.

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Reference

1. HOLST R, PHILLIPS SA, EDS. *The Medical Library Association guide to managing health care libraries*. New York, NY: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2000.

The Medical Library Association Guide to Managing Health Care Libraries. Edited by Ruth Holst with associate editor Sharon A. Phillips. New York, NY: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 2000. 371 p. Softcover. \$75.00 ISBN: 1-55570-397-6. ☺

In 1983, *Hospital Library Management* [1] was published. It was quickly accepted as the de facto standard for hospital librarians. Many dog-eared copies of that text still adorn offices of hospital librarians. Seventeen years have passed. In the intervening years, health care and health care institutions have seen dramatic changes influenced by advances in medicine, biotechnology, politics, regulatory